

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

□ 1530

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The Chair will now entertain one-minute requests.

TRIBUTE TO BILL POWELL, A MIDDLE GEORGIA LEGEND

(Mr. CHAMBLISS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a middle Georgia legend, Bill Powell, who will close out 40-plus years of service during tonight's 6:00 newscast on WMAZ TV in Macon, Georgia.

Upon his arrival in Macon on WMAZ radio in 1958, Bill quickly became one of the community's most popular radio personalities, and it was only natural when Bill leaped into television weather at WMAZ in 1982 that he soon became one of central Georgia's best and most popular television personalities.

Bill has given of his time to speak to local schools and community organizations concerning various weather topics. He has served with distinction on a number of boards within central Georgia, such as the Museum of Aviation, the Middle Georgia Air Force Association, and the South Side Lions Club.

As Bill retires, he will take his sense of humor and fun-loving personality, but will leave a legacy of community service that will be difficult to surpass.

Congratulations, Bill, on a job well done. As you told your listeners for so many years, keep on keeping on. God bless you, Bill.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mrs. LINDA SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE PROBLEM OF RISING PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, recently I introduced legislation to create a commission that will report to the Congress on the problem of rising prescription drug prices. The commission will do much needed research into how we can change public policy to ensure the affordability of prescription drugs.

Prescription drugs are the highest out-of-pocket expenses for three out of four elderly patients. Recent price increases for generic pharmaceuticals have been as severe as 4,000 percent. One thousand tablets of Chlorpropamide, a medication that is necessary to sustain life for diabetics, has gone from \$19.45 to \$306.66 this year.

All other segments of the health care industry have contributed greatly to bringing down health care costs. Since 1980, the cost of pharmaceuticals have risen over 2½ times the rate of inflation. Everyone is affected by these increases through insurance costs, government reimbursements, not just the uninsured.

Considering the Federal Government's and taxpayers' rather large public investment in the pharmaceutical industry through the form of tax incentives, tax write-offs, and grants, some discipline in making responsible pricing decisions should be expected.

The industry had over \$6 billion in annual deductions for promotional activity before the FDA recently decided to relax direct marketing restrictions. This commission will lay a foundation on which to build policy that keeps prescription drugs reasonably priced.

The commission will look into why American consumers are paying much more than those in other countries, why increases are out of line with inflation of other goods. It is time for the Congress to act responsibly and ensure that corporate greed does not get in the way of our seniors having affordable health care.

This legislation is fair and evenhanded, and something our senior citizens and the public deserve. I encourage Members to support this bill.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the special order time of the gentleman from California (Mr. RIGGS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

AMERICA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MEXICO IN THE WAR AGAINST DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House again this afternoon to talk about the subject of the problem of illegal narcotics, and in particular this afternoon, to address the problem relating to our relations with Mexico and Mexico's effort in our war on drugs.

As Members may recall, the Clinton administration certified Mexico recently as cooperating in our war on drugs. I really want to call to the House's attention the current situation with Mexico, which is reaching disastrous proportions. Just today there is information that our United States agents are warned of Mexican retaliation as a result of their participation in a sting operation in Mexico.

I have followed this effort of the United States to take action in Mexico in a money laundering and illegal narcotics operation within the confines of Mexico. I pulled up some of the headlines, which are quite revealing.

This one is the week of May 20. It says, "Reno Lauds Mexico for Help with Probe. Customs Targeting Drug Money Bankers."

In this sting operation the Attorney General said, "Law enforcement officials in Mexico have promised to cooperate in a massive U.S. Customs Service money laundering investigation aimed at Mexico banks."

Then we see another headline a few days later, "Mexico Promises Probe of Bankers Indicted for Laundering." This is the headline on May 20; again, cooperation.

Then we find a sudden turn of events, that in fact Mexico is not cooperating. The headlines from the Washington Post on May 23 say "Zedillo," the Mexican President, "Blasts U.S. Undercover Drug Sting." He condemned the use of U.S. agents in that operation.

Then we saw an apology in another headline, "Clinton Regrets Keeping Sting Secret."

Then we find out that the sting was not secret, that in fact the Mexicans knew about it and were told about it in advance. The Wall Street Journal reports, "Bank Bust Stings U.S.-Mexico Relations."

The latest in today's newspaper, as I said when I began, is "U.S. Agents Warned of Mexican Retaliation."

Mr. Speaker, this is the country we certified as cooperating. This is the country that the Attorney General praised for cooperating in this sting.

This is what is reported in today's paper: "The United States Drug Enforcement Administration has pulled its agents out of Tijuana, and the Justice Department is warning American